

Jonathan Boucher to George Washington, February 21, 1772, Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers. Published by the Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton.

FROM THE REV. JONATHAN BOUCHER.

Febry. 21st. 1772.

DEAR SIR

I congratulate You, & the World with Us, on our Restoration to a temperate Zone: for, in Truth, We have had a kind of a Greenland Winter. And, for my own Part, I own to You, I now have a much stronger Idea of the Nature of a Winter pass'd in a Cave, than I could ever have learn'd from Books alone. I sometimes almost regretted, We could not become quite torpid, & sleep out the whole dreary Season, as snakes & some other Animals are said to do: or that, as, like Bears, we were shut up in our Dens, We could not, like Them also, live without Fire, & by sucking our Paws: for I had some Cause to imagine, if the Weather had held much longer, We should have had some Temptation to try.

To What I have heretofore said on the Subject of these Accounts, I have little now to add; unless, I should beg leave to suggest to You, by way of diminishing in some sort their enormous Amount, that they take in a Period of Eighteen Months, at the least—& that They are in a Currency so much worse than yours. Comparing Him with the Youths around Him, He really seem'd frugal; &, as far as I knew, never indulged in any expence that I could have suppos'd You would have had him restrain'd in. I knew You expected Him to make such an Appearance as He did, & keep such Company as He did: I knew not of the twenty pounds, & am indeed somewhat surpriz'd at it: how it has been spent I know

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not. I have just enquir'd of Him, & can only hear that He bought Oranges & Pine-Apples &c, & gave away a Ticket or two. But, as This is by no means a satisfactory Acct., I have ordered Him to write to You about it; & if He cannot account for it, at least to apologise to You for his Remissness. I hope it was rather trifled & fooled away, than spent in a more blameable manner, which I think could hardly have been without my knowledge. And, a very few venial Peccadillos excepted, I have little of this Sort to charge Him with.—The boarding a Person is not, I should imagine, to be considered as finding Him just such a Quantity of Provisions &c. In Frazier's Case, it was his Livelihood, & a handsome one it is to Him. He considers his House-Rent, & all his own Attendance, Servants, & a long et cetera. My Charge was govern'd by His, which, knowing my Board to be so much better, I thought a sufficient Warrant for Me. I never aim'd to make a Living by taking Boarders: in Virginia, I am persuaded I lost by it. You will, however, be so good as consider, that no Man can, even with the most Easy & manageable Boarder, be quite so Easy in his Family, as without Them—& something shou'd be allow'd for the Inconvenience He puts himself to. I do, however, agree with You that £25 a year for a Boy in a Kitchen, is an extravagant Charge: but, I suppose, it is considered as making some amends for other Disadvantages—at least, this was the Apology Frazier made to Me.

I observe the Errors You have pointed out: in answer to which, all I can say is, that I well know I paid the Money to the Man, at the Time I have charged it; & This I am the surer of, as Mr. Custis also remembers it. Galloway was represented to Me as a Man who had once seen better days, & deserving of Compassion. He was exceedingly needy, & constantly sending to Me for Money. How it has happened that He charged these Sums over again, & that I overlook'd Them, I cannot account for, till I see Mr. Jacques, who was so obliging as to take the trouble of settling with Him for Me. I will, however, have it rectify'd, & accordingly, I have already given You Credit for it in my Book.

I find much Trouble & Vexation in this said Country about this Article of Exchange; &, hitherto, have generally lost by it. They seem to have no standard, no fixed Regulation, as with You. I enquir'd of some of the principal Annaps. & Baltimore Merchts. before I wrote

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to You; but, I will enquire again; & if Bills either have been, or shall be, Either in this or the next Month sold at 60 perr. Ct., I will allow it. Some Allowances Y [mutilated] is to be made for the Medium thro' which are generally receiv [mutilated] gence of this Sort: there are always a few degrees difference betwe [mutilated] buyer & a seller.

I fear, it will be impracticable to lay in Provender &c for [mutilated] Horses in this Neighbourhood; as I can hire but one Stable, & that a most wretched one. This Article, however, cannot possibly hereafter be so heavy a one as it has been—nor, indeed, I hope, any other.

Ld. B: is certainly dead; but I believe it is still unknown [mutilated] Will is. It had not been sent to Engld. from Naples where He dy [mutilated] the last Letters I saw or heard of came away. Every Thing, howev [mutilated] known, is in favour of Govr. Eden. At all Events, I guess, He [mutilated] have a fight for it: & I join with You in wishing that every [mutilated] may be as much to his Advantage, as I should fancy it is, that He [mutilated] possession. The chief Difficulty seems to be, whether the Proprietary [mutilated] or was not Entail'd & so whether willable or not. If this Doubt [mutilated] be answer'd in the Affirmative, I believe Mr. Eden has little [mutilated] being Proprietor.—I have not seen Him this month, or upwards [mutilated] of trying to get thither next week, when I shall not fail to remem [mutilated] to Him.—Our Assembly, I hear, on Acct. of this desperate [mutilated] is prorogued till late in March.—Shou'd I hear any thing that I can [mutilated] it wou'd be agreeable to You to hear of, I will write to You in Wmsburg I wish You a pleasant & agreeable sojournment.

I am, most truly, Dr. Sir Yrs. &c JONAN. [mutilated]

I send back the accts.—as I can do without them—& tho' I wish'd to [mutilated] had Rects. under Them, yet, I fancy, my general Rect. may do.

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Be so good as to take the trouble of two or three Lrs. to drop in your way down.